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OO RUEHGA RUEHHA RUEHQU RUEHVC  
DE RUEHOT #0172 0351626  
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O 041626Z FEB 08  
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7246  
INFO RUCNCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0233

UNCLAS OTTAWA 000172

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [SY](#) [CA](#)  
SUBJECT: CANADA ON SYRIAN POLITICAL DISSIDENTS

REF: A. OTTAWA 0024

[1](#)B. 07 STATE 171106

[1](#)1. (SBU) According to Director of the Middle East Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs Michael Grant, Canada decided to make a public statement in Damascus (text in para 2) in lieu of a demarche to the Syrian government in response to reftel demarche. Its embassy issued the statement on January 31.

[1](#)2. (U) Begin Text

Canada is deeply concerned about the arrest of Riad Seif, a respected member of Syrian civil society. This development has renewed Canada's deep concerns over the human rights situation in Syria, as it follows the recent detention of other civil society activists associated with the "Damascus Declaration."

We urge Syria to take all possible steps to ensure that domestic law and practices are in keeping with Syria's international human rights obligations, including as they pertain to arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom of movement, minimum guarantees for judicial proceedings, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of association.

End Text

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